

Communication Policy

This is a whole school policy for students and staff in the school. It deals with communication within the school and between the school and our partners. To contribute to ensuring inclusivity and cooperation this policy emphasises maintaining and improving the current channels of communication among the users of the school and with the partners in education.

Relationship to School Mission Statement

Good communication is essential to maintaining a positive working and learning environment. Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect in a happy, caring and supportive environment means that people feel included, consulted and informed. This requires that we use of a variety of channels of communication so as to ensure that the relevant people receive the necessary information.

Goal - What is the Policy Intended to Achieve?

The goal of this policy is to contribute to effective communication within the school, with the Board of Management, with parents and with the local community, so as to maintain a good working, social and personal environment. This will promote efficiency and contribute to achieving the objectives of the school.

Means of Communication

This policy encourages the use of the most effective communications mechanisms, depending on context, while ensuring the rights of staff, students and parents. The school encourages openness in internal communication and the sharing of relevant and appropriate information through a variety of mechanisms. (See Appendix 1 for the range of communications mechanisms used in the school).

The school is committed to consultation with staff and students over school matters, in a way that is consistent with effective management. The staff recognise the importance of face-to-face communication, in that it can frequently be more effective than written communication. All internal communications should be expressed clearly.

As far as possible staff and/or students are informed of important school issues no later than the media or other external bodies.

Use of Email and the Web

Email and the Web are frequently used modes of written communication for all staff and students. Clear guidelines are provided by the school on the use of electronic media. Refer to the ICT Policy. IT access is made available to the widest possible number of staff and students and provision is made for communicating with those who do not have IT access.

Best practice is promoted and followed in the production of web pages, notably with regard to clarity of structure and currency of information.

Personal and Confidential Information

Personal data is protected in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Our Data Protection Policy provides guidance for the maintenance of personal data in order to be compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation. Some categories and items of information regarding both staff and students need to be kept confidential. All staff are bound to take care with the handling and transmission of confidential information, with regard to how and to whom the information is transmitted.

Internal communications using electronic media must be conducted under the internet usage policy of the school.

Policy in Relation to Some Significant Communication Channels.

Teacher with Teacher:

Recognising its importance, the school encourages best practice in communication at intra-departmental level; between year heads and subject teachers; and between senior management and all subject teachers. Also, good personal relationships between staff members are encouraged. Meetings between the Year Heads, Principal and Deputy Principal take place weekly. Notices are posted in the staffroom in an accessible area for teachers and are updated regularly.

Administration Staff:

The administration staff is involved in a wide range of supporting activities for all staff, students and parents. They assist with the smooth running of the school on a day-to-day basis.

Ancillary Staff

The ancillary staff are very important in supporting the teachers and students in having an orderly, safe and clean school environment. Maintaining courteous and professional relationships with the ancillary staff is important for all members of the school community. In particular, teachers are requested to instruct and supervise students leaving the classroom tidy in order to facilitate room cleaning.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

SNAs are recruited to assist in the care of students with special educational needs within the school. They play an important role in ensuring that the student understands his/her school tasks and can thus participate to the best of his/her ability in the school. It is the policy of the school to support effective communication between the SNA, student, parent and

teachers, taking into account the particular special educational needs of the students involved.

Teacher to Student

The quality of the relationship between teachers and students is very important in supporting and promoting learning in the school. This relationship is best when based on mutual respect. To assist in creating and maintaining a safe and comfortable environment for learning, students are required to treat all school staff and other students with due respect.

Teacher to Parents/Guardians

Maintaining clear communication between teachers and parents is important in achieving the objective of educating our students to the highest standards. An important aspect of this relationship is the subject teacher or year head reporting the student's progress and behaviour to the parent/guardian. The student's journal is an important channel of communication between the teachers and parent/s. Communication may also occur between teachers and parents/guardians using other means for example phone call, letter etc. as is considered necessary at the time. Teachers report to parents in the mid-term reports, Christmas & Summer reports, at parent teacher meetings and at other times deemed appropriate. Meetings occur between teachers and parents/guardians at the request of either party at a time convenient to both parties.

Student to Student

Learning good social and interpersonal skills with one's peers is an important part of school life. In line with our Code of Behaviour, students are required to be respectful, co-operative and courteous to all within the school environment.

Board of Management

The Board of Management meets 5 or 6 times a year. The Board includes two teacher representatives.

The function of the teaching staff representatives is to:

- Represent views of staff at the BOM
- The Secretary to the Board of Management will email staff with an Agreed Report after each Board Meeting.

Roles and Responsibilities on each of the Partners of Communication

The following have a responsibility within the school environment:

Principal and Deputy Principal to all the relevant parties:

- All events
- Ensuring that all communications re personal and confidential nature are treated accordingly.

Year Heads:

- Communicating with all relevant parties in relation to the year group

Class Teacher:

- Reporting to Year Head

Admin Staff:

Conducting and co-ordinating communications between:

- Parents and staff and vice versa
- Parents and son
- DES and school
- Outside agencies and the school
- Suppliers and the school
- Local community and the school
- School Chaplain and school

Resource Staff

The Resource staff play an important role in mediating between parents and staff particularly in relation to students with special needs.

In relation to students with an SNA the Resource staff have an important role in initiating and supporting the relationship between the student and the SNA.

Career Guidance

Guidance Counsellors play a critical role in communicating with students, staff and external agencies with regard to students' personal well-being and career planning.

Guidance Counsellors have a responsibility to ensure that all communications of a personal and confidential nature are treated accordingly.

Communicate with year heads with regard to student welfare and academic progress.
Regular communication with Principal and Deputy Principal.

Communicate with subject teachers in relation to academic progress of students.

Liaise with Programme Co-ordinators – TY.

Communicate with SPHE Co-ordinator.

Communicate with Resource and Special Education Needs teachers in relation to students with special needs.

Liaise with outside welfare agencies – Social Workers, Child and Family Centres, Education Welfare Officer etc.

Liaise with NEPS.

Make referrals to private Counsellors when necessary.

Communicate with Parents/Guardians – one-to-one meetings.

Liaise with Employers, Colleges, Training Agencies and Professional Bodies.

Appendix 1

Forms of Communication Used in the School

Verbal

- Interpersonal communication, classroom work, announcements, meetings etc.

Written

- Letters/ notes to staff, students, parents etc.
- Notice Board in staff room
- Calendar of events in the staff room/on website
- Student reports
- Student Journal

Meetings

- Staff Meeting
- Year Head Meetings
- Students Council Staff meetings
- Parent Teacher meetings
- Professional Development staff days
- Subject Department Meetings
- Task Groups (Ad-Hoc).

Electronic

- School Website
- Email between all users and staff of the school
- Email of regular updates from Principal/Deputy Principal
- Email of school notes to staff weekly
- Text messaging
- Internal phone line

Proposed by: _____ Chairperson _____

Seconded by: _____ Date: _____